September 23, 2016

Mr. and Mrs. ▮▮▮▮▮▮

We appreciate your patience as we have had conversation and investigated the information you have forwarded to our attention. This communication is not intended to replace conversation, but instead to shape any future conversation if you would like to meet.

The issues you have raised are complex. First of all, when you search the Internet from your home, you are not limited by filters that exist within the CCSD Internet system. Thus, you may be able to access links and sites from your home that students cannot access from school. We not only maintain Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) filters, we work to identify concerning content/pictures and adjust as we become aware of concerns.

Having said that, the Internet involves some inherent risk. Literally, the available material is constantly changing and we have no reasonable way of both giving students access to learning sources and simultaneously ensuring that they will never come in contact with information which is controversial or inappropriate.

With regard to your statement that you can only conclude that we are hiding information from parents because the student access to my.cherrycreekschools.org differs from the parent log-in, we offer the following: we pay licensing fees for students to access the applications. We do not pay access fees for parents, nor would it be in our primary interest to do so. Parents can do exactly what you've done – use your student's log-in to see what your child can access. Exploring the resources from home is different from doing so on school property. We cannot transfer our filtering capabilities to your home. We have no interest in hiding anything from parents. We fully support your involvement and supervision.

While it may be true that students can access a wider range of information from home, that is true with and without a link to the CCSD site. Ultimately, it is determined by your filtering systems, or lack thereof, and your level of supervision of your student.

While we provide clarity on our Internet access expectations via the agreements that students and parents sign at the beginning of the school year, we also advocate for home-school partnerships which support the appropriate use of the Internet. While you are best suited to set and monitor the values you hold for your student, we hope you can respect that public school systems cannot build learning experiences based on the preferences of one specific family. We do our best to navigate the learning process with an interest in serving our students and respecting them as they mature and exercise varying levels of interest in topics relevant to their lives.

We did explore the links you sent and found that some are accessible in our system. We've blocked ones that appear to cross a line with regard to adult sexual content and we are working with one vendor to remove access to a category targeted at adults.

With regard to your concern that we are teaching "sex education" and not complying with laws requiring us to share that information with parents, you have not provided any evidence that any of the things you found offensive in your browsing were actually taught in any of our classrooms.

Research databases are never a replacement for instruction; they are living and evolving systems with a purpose.

When concerns are brought to our attention, several professionals review the concern and we make a collaborative decision if we block content. We do not block content simply because it might be controversial. Policy IMB (Teaching about Controversial/Sensitive Issues), supports the thoughtful use of controversial materials for learning. We believe that guided analysis of a variety of points of view is critical to an excellent k-12 education.

While we are well aware that you have concerns with discussions and content related to LGBTQ issues, we have a compelling interest in providing a safe and supportive learning environment for all students. We are clear on your values in this area, and Fox Ridge works to respect your wishes with regard to your daughter. We are not aware of any learning experience which violated that expectation since your last meeting with the school and district staff.

It would be nearly impossible for us to monitor every possibility that opens with Internet accessibility. We have taken reasonable precautions to keep students safe (examples - filters, blocking inappropriate content, providing teacher guidance, Internet agreements signed by parents and students, reasonable monitoring of research projects and browsing, loss of privilege consequences for misuse of the resource).

In our process of supporting the development of young people, we navigate boundaries and personal responsibility. We believe that the vast majority of our students use resources for their intended purpose and understand that misuse can result in a loss of privilege. We do not see that navigation as inappropriate for middle school students.

As parents, we ask that you partner with us to keep your student safe. Public schools are places where students are following and respecting the values they bring from home, as well as places where they begin to develop their own values. By definition, learning involves encountering and creating meaning from new content.

Here are our specific responses and recommendations to your concerns:

1) Please determine if you have filtering software on your home computer and continue to monitor your student's academic usage of the Internet. There are many filtering products available and we are happy to make a recommendation for your consideration.

2) Make the specific teacher or school aware of any content / lesson related concerns that you encounter. We will continue to investigate learning related issues, but we find it impractical to randomly research the places that unsupervised students can go on the Internet. We expect reasonable supervision of school tools while students are at school. We also believe that parents take over that role once students go home.

3) Continue to inform us if there are topics that you find concerning, preferably in writing. We respect the school-community partnership and we will continue to examine concerns that you share.

4) We have blocked some of the content you questioned. In other cases, we do not agree that access to database information constitutes "teaching a topic." Students can access information about installing a new roof on the Internet, but that doesn't mean we are teaching them that trade. We will continue to have a broad database which requires appropriate supervision, filters and manual content

blocking when new content may bypass the filter. This is a permanently imperfect science, but we view it as a critical component in 21st-century learning.

5) We will continue to exercise our best professional judgment and relevant research with regard to the psychological and physical safety of our students. Our organizational commitment to Inclusive Excellence remains our guiding compass regarding the LGBTQ community and related issues.

Thank you for taking the time to read this lengthy response and thank you, again, for your patience. Our large system has many moving parts and we wanted to investigate and coordinate this response so that it captures our collective thinking and intention.

Please feel free to respond to us with any additional questions or to schedule a meeting to discuss this further. Dr. Kennedy's assistant, Sara Ramirez (720-554-4209), is your designated contact if you would like to schedule an appointment with us.

Sincerely,

Brooke Gregory, Assistant Superintendent of Educational Operations

Jason Koenig, Chief Information Officer

Dr. John Kennedy, Executive Director of Middle School Education

Sarah Grobbel, Executive Director of High School Education